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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 03832

SIPDIS
CXABU:

ACTION: POL
INFO: MEPI DCM P/M RSO ECON AMB

DISSEMINATION: POL
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APPROVED: DCA:RALBRIGHT
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RR RUEHC RUEHDE
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6527
INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 4427

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 003832

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER KCRM TC
SUBJECT: UAE 9/11 hijacker linked to 1996 rape and murder case

¶1. An appeal of an old murder case reported October 22 in the local press revealed a violent criminal episode in the life of Fayed Al Qadi Banihammad, one of two UAE nationals among the hijackers aboard United Airlines Flight 175 in the 9/11 attacks. According to the October 22 Gulf News article, Fayed Banihammad was one of six UAE nationals convicted of the 1996 rape of a UAE juvenile. The then-juvenile, described only as E.M., was himself recently convicted and sentenced to death by the Fujairah Sharia Court after he was found guilty of tracking down and murdering one of his six rapists, a former "best friend."

¶2. The story has hit the papers now because the rape victim/murderer has filed an appeal with the UAE Supreme Court to reduce the Fujairah Sharia Court's death sentence to imprisonment. The first hearing is in November. (Note: The last death sentence carried out in the UAE was in June 1998 when Atallah Khair Mohammed, a Pakistani, was executed by firing squad in Dubai for a 1993 murder. End note.)

¶3. The six UAE nationals accused of sexual assault were each sentenced to five years in prison. The victim's former "best friend," missing at the time of the trial, was sentenced in absentia. The men appealed and the Appeals Court reduced the sentence on the rapists to nine months and ordered a lashing, according to Gulf News.

¶4. The affair began to take its bizarre twist a year after the rape when the body of the victim's missing "best friend" was discovered near a village. Authorities said the man had been dead about a year. Initially, no one was charged. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, in which hijacker Fayed Bannihammad died, two of his relatives were arrested in Khor Fakkan for "staging a protest" and jailed in Abu Dhabi. Undercover police who questioned the two relatives in prison learned about the rape and the

subsequent murder of one of those convicted of the rape: the suspects being interrogated in Abu Dhabi told police that the rape victim had borrowed a pistol from one of them, and had gone with 9/11 hijacker Fayed Banihammad to kill the former "best friend."

ALBRIGHT